

Assembly Bill No. 758

CHAPTER 394

An act to amend Section 2782 of the Civil Code, relating to construction contracts.

[Approved by Governor September 29, 2005. Filed with
Secretary of State September 29, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 758, Calderon. Construction contracts: indemnity.

Existing law provides that, except as specified, agreements affecting any construction contract that purport to indemnify the promisee against liability for damages for death or bodily injury to persons, injury to property, or any other loss, damage, or expense arising from the sole negligence or willful misconduct of the promisee or the promisee's agents, servants, or independent contractors who are directly responsible to the promisee, or for defects in design furnished by those persons, are against public policy and are void and unenforceable.

This bill would provide that, except as specified, all agreements affecting any residential construction contract and amendments thereto entered into after January 1, 2006, that purport to indemnify the builder by a subcontractor against liability for claims of construction defects or other injury to property arising from, pertaining to, or relating to the negligence of the builder or the builder's other agents, servants, or independent contractors who are directly responsible to the builder, or for defects in design furnished by those persons, or for claims that are unrelated to the scope of work in the agreement, are unenforceable, as specified.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 2782 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

2782. (a) Except as provided in Sections 2782.1, 2782.2, 2782.5, and 2782.6, provisions, clauses, covenants, or agreements contained in, collateral to, or affecting any construction contract and that purport to indemnify the promisee against liability for damages for death or bodily injury to persons, injury to property, or any other loss, damage or expense arising from the sole negligence or willful misconduct of the promisee or the promisee's agents, servants, or independent contractors who are directly responsible to the promisee, or for defects in design furnished by those persons, are against public policy and are void and unenforceable; provided, however, that this section shall not affect the validity of any insurance contract, workers' compensation, or agreement issued by an admitted insurer as defined by the Insurance Code.

(b) Except as provided in Sections 2782.1, 2782.2, and 2782.5, provisions, clauses, covenants, or agreements contained in, collateral to, or affecting any construction contract with a public agency that purport to impose on the contractor, or relieve the public agency from, liability for the active negligence of the public agency are void and unenforceable.

(c) For all construction contracts, and amendments thereto, entered into after January 1, 2006, for residential construction, as used in Title 7 (commencing with Section 895) of Part 2 of Division 2, all provisions, clauses, covenants, and agreements contained in, collateral to, or affecting any such construction contract, and amendments thereto, that purport to indemnify, including the cost to defend, the builder, as defined in Section 911, by a subcontractor against liability for claims of construction defects are unenforceable to the extent the claims arise out of, pertain to, or relate to the negligence of the builder or the builder's other agents, other servants, or other independent contractors who are directly responsible to the builder, or for defects in design furnished by those persons, or to the extent the claims do not arise out of, pertain to, or relate to the scope of work in the written agreement between the parties. This section shall not be waived or modified by contractual agreement, act, or omission of the parties. Contractual provisions, clauses, covenants, or agreements not expressly prohibited herein are reserved to the agreement of the parties.

(d) Subdivision (c) does not prohibit a subcontractor and builder from mutually agreeing to the timing or immediacy of the defense and provisions for reimbursement of defense fees and costs, so long as that agreement, upon final resolution of the claims, does not waive or modify the provisions of subdivision (c). Subdivision (c) shall not affect the obligations of an insurance carrier under the holding of *Presley Homes, Inc. v. American States Insurance Company* (2001) 90 Cal.App.4th 571. Subdivision (c) shall not affect the builder's or subcontractor's obligations pursuant to Chapter 4 (commencing with Section 910) of Title 7 of Part 2 of Division 2.